Tamarind Chicken with Mixed Vegetables and Pineapple

Tamarind adds a lovely flavor to dishes. Tamarind trees grow throughout the Caribbean, and after peeling and discarding the outer shells from the dried tamarind pods, it makes a delightful snack. In this recipe, you can substitute shrimp or tofu for the chicken if desired. Once the skin and center seed are removed, cayote squash adds a pleasant flavor and texture to a mixed vegetable dish, although you can substitute nearly any squash if you do not find it in your market.

Prep Time: 25 Minutes
Serves: Two

Ingredients:
 2 tablespoon avocado oil
14 ounces de-boned chicken thighs, sliced into 1-inch strips, pat and dry with paper towels
½ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
½ teaspoon dried thyme
1 medium onion, chopped,
1 medium cayote squash, peeled, center seed removed, chopped (or use 1 medium zucchini, or yellow squash)
2 medium carrots, chopped
1 medium bell pepper (red, green, orange, or yellow), seeds and core removed, chopped
2 medium green onions, chopped
1 cup pineapple, chopped
¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
¼ cup tamarind concentrate (or paste)
½ cup low-sodium veggie broth (or white wine—if using wine or water, add an extra ¼ teaspoon of salt)
1/8 – ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

Directions:
Heat a large sauté pan to medium-high heat. Add chicken, salt, black pepper, and thyme. Heat for 4-5 minutes with an occasional stir until chicken is lightly browned. Spoon chicken into a bowl and set aside.

Add onion to the sauté pan and heat for two minutes with an occasional stir, then add carrots and cayote, heat another 3 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Reduce heat to medium and add bell pepper, green onions, pineapple, and nutmeg. Then add chicken back into the pan.

Combine tamarind and broth in a bowl and stir until well mixed.

Optionally add the crushed red pepper flakes to the solution. Add tamarind solution to the sauté pan, reduce heat to low, and simmer for five minutes.

Serve in a bowl.

Enjoy,
Steven Masley, MD